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SIR CASPAR PURDON CLARKE

THE following resolution was adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Museum at a meeting held April 17, 1911:

RESOLVED, That in the death of Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke the Metropolitan Museum of Art has lost one who, in its new era of prosperity, did much toward affiliating the institution with the life of the people of the city and more particularly with the classes to which it may be of greatest practical service, the artisan and the manufacturer. Of unusual training in industrial art, of wide personal experience in practical matters, of distinguished service to his native country both at home and in India, of encyclopedic information, and, best of all, of unfailing sympathy and kindliness, he was peculiarly well fitted in equipment of mind and heart to strike the personal note which brought the citizens of New York to a realizing sense of their welcome to the Museum and their participation in its advantages. During Sir Purdon's incumbency of the Directorship, the pervasive qualities of the man gave to the activities of the Trustees a personality rich in humanity, which will ever remain a testimony to his worth and service.

BRONZES BY RICCIO

ANDREA BRIOSCO, called Riccio, who lived at Padua from 1470-1532, may be called the greatest master of bronze statuettes and plaquettes of the Italian Renaissance. Like most of the artists of the Renaissance, he was many-sided; he produced large bronze and marble sculptures as well as works of architecture—the splendid church of St. Justina at Padua is partly his work—but like his great comrades he had one field in which he could best express himself. Dr. Bode,¹ who deserves the credit of having placed this artist in the prominent position he now holds, attributes to him no less than seventy bronze statuettes, and his plaquettes are still more numerous. This

¹The Italian Bronze Statuettes of the Renaissance, by Wilhelm Bode. London, Vol. I, p. 23.

art was most expressive of his inventive, romantic, and humorous temperament. His inexhaustible imagination, his ability to combine lifelike forms with conventional ornament, his art of breaking the surface by a rich modeling and curving the outlines fantastically, and his grotesque humor are qualities especially valuable in the production of small bronzes; for these are made to be seen at close range, to be taken in the hand, and they necessarily require different treatment from large sculptures of terracotta or marble. At first glance the charm of the varied motives, which a closer view unfolds, is hidden by the dark material; these would be far too numerous and crowded to introduce in a sculpture of marble, but the bronze needs a surface that will allow a diversified range for the play of light and shade and at the same time one that presents a sharply defined outline that will throw the surroundings into the background.

The three recently acquired works of Riccio—two bronze lamps and a stand for a penholder in the shape of a seated youth—are good examples of a treatment of this kind. The larger lamp shows the ability of the artist to combine human, animal, and vegetable forms in a lifelike creation similar to a sphinx, and to adapt this figure to the conventional shape of a lamp with the openings for the flame and the filling spout.

The sphinx, which in the upper part takes the form of a female body and in the lower that of a lion rests curiously on three legs with the back legs so joined in one that the side view of the lamp does not at first glance reveal the contraction. The front legs are covered with sharply serrated leaves which terminate on the back of the sphinx in two scrolls suggesting wings, the introduction of which would not allow sufficient space for the necessary opening between them. The flat shell which covers this opening on the back is a typical Riccio ornament and one used by him more often than any other form; it appears again at the back of the head of the figure. In the head-dress, in which Riccio usually shows his fantastic taste, we find characteristic ornaments of this artist, such as the

two horns surrounding the ears. Our model differs somewhat from the one in the Museo Nazionale at Florence, illustrated in Dr. Bode's book. The ribbons and horns in our example are more richly decorated and the leaves on the legs have other outlines which show that the two lamps came from different models.

The clear, sharp curves of the sphinx lamp seem to relax in the smaller bronze lamp in the form of a negro boy recently acquired by the Museum. The lines are more flowing, the treatment of the surface more glittering; instead of the geometrical conventionalization we find a pictorial, realistic style showing the different manner in which Riccio was able to work. The introduction of numerous and curious motives, which we find typical of Riccio's small objects, is also found in this example. The negro boy crouches on the head of a horse, which holds in his mouth the spout for carrying the flame. The negro, the horse, and the lower part of the spout are decorated with realistic grapevine leaves. While the sphinx lamp in its execution is absolutely Riccio's own invention and only in its general motive shows classical reminiscence this smaller lamp is doubtless a free imitation of a similar Roman bronze or terra-cotta, as the animal's head holding the spout in its mouth is characteristic of Roman lamps, just as the crouching negro boy is sometimes found in late Greek terra-cotta vases.

A similar motive of a crouching boy is found in the third bronze object by Riccio, which has been presented to the Museum by Mr. J. Goldschmidt. The boy, who has a lambskin over his shoulders, holds between his crossed legs a small barrel very likely designed for penholders. The motive has an excellent plastic quality and shows the tendency of the artist to condense the greatest variety of forms in a space as small as possible.

Besides these objects, the Museum has two plaquettes by Riccio on exhibition, one lent by Mr. Grenville L. Winthrop, both representing the less grotesque and more severely classical style which Riccio followed in his reliefs.

W. R. V.

CRETAN REPRODUCTIONS

THE great interest which the public has shown in our collection of Cretan reproductions¹ has lent encouragement to make it more and more representative. Several notable examples have recently been added, and have now been temporarily placed on view in the Room of Recent Accessions before their removal to the Gallery of Greek Prehistoric Art (No. 20). They consist of five frescoes, all from Knossos and Hagia Triada, and two colored plaster casts of the Phaestos Disk and the Boxers' Vase. Of the frescoes the best known is the famous painting of a cat hunting a pheasant (fig. 2), a wonderfully realistic study of animal life. The scene is laid in a rocky landscape, the center of which is taken up with a spreading ivy plant; to the left a pheasant with long tail and bright plumage is calmly perched on a trunk or rock, all unconscious of approaching danger; behind it, to the right, a cat is slowly advancing with stealthy tread and eyes fixed on its prey, ready in a moment for the final spring. As an example of sympathetic study of nature, simply but effectively rendered, this scene could hardly be surpassed. The fresco was found at Hagia Triada, the royal villa near Phaestos, in a room from which many other fragments, also depicting out-of-door life, have been recovered. Several of these are among the frescoes just acquired. One represents a hare, of which all but the head is preserved, running at full speed to the left. Another shows a flowering plant and branches of ivy delicately painted in brownish tints (fig. 1); on the left of these can still be seen the curved back and the horn of an animal, probably a bull. Of great interest is the fresco of a woman in a brightly colored costume. She wears what at first sight seems to be a pair of loose trousers, but is more probably the familiar bell-shaped skirt ending in a point in the middle of the front, a clear example of which appears on the little gold ornament from Mycenae (see Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, VI, fig. 383, p. 814). The garment

¹ Described in the Museum BULLETINS for February, 1908, p. 22 ff. and May, 1910, p. 113 ff.